News release

New rainfall radar for Kent

14 January 2004

Plans to introduce a new weather radar near Maidstone have been announced by the Met Office and Environment Agency. Weather radar measure the rate of rainfall over a wide area and provide data for the rainfall displays often seen on television weather forecasts. The proposed scheme will comprise a new advanced-technology radar added to the existing UK network of 12 radar.

As well as being used in Met Office weather forecasts, the Environment Agency receives dedicated information from the weather radar system which it processes and displays for use in conjunction with its flood forecasting and warning systems. The severe floods in the south and south-east of England, particularly during the Autumn and Winter of 2000/1 and Winter 2003, have highlighted the need for more accurate and timely rainfall measurements in these regions to feed to those systems. The Environment Agency Southern and Thames Regions and the Met Office have set up a project to improve the quality of the regions' rainfall data and, therefore, improve the systems that help people take evasive action when floods threaten their property or even their lives.

However, as the whole of the UK is currently only covered by a network of 12 weather radar, more radar sites are needed. The best site for the new radar in Kent is in a wood on the North Downs above Maidstone. The project partners are currently undertaking environmental assessment work and consulting local residents and planners, as well as the wider community.

Martin Ward, Met Office Radar Development Manager said: "Data from radar is a vital component of a successful forecast and is crucial when it comes to issuing warnings of heavy rainfall events. Extending and developing the weather radar network, using leading-edge technology, means we can continue to improve our services to the community as a whole."

Russell Turner, Regional Flood Warning Officer for Environment Agency Southern Region, said: "The new radar installations will lead to real benefits for those living in southern areas vulnerable to flooding by increasing the lead time for warnings issued."

British Isles rainfall animation page

For further information:
Met Office Press Office +44 (0)1392 886655

Met Office Customer Centre 0870 900 0100
If you're outside the UK +44 (0)1392 885680

PRINTABLE VERSION

About
Met Office
Hadley Centre
Terms and conditions
Advertise on our site

News
News release archive
Media Centre

Learn
About the weather
From the bookshelf

Services

Mobile text forecasts
Weathercall
Marinecall
Mountain weather
MetWEB
Talk to a forecaster

Links
Met Office data users
National met. services
Scientific interest sites
EA Floodline
Directgov
Freedom of Information

Contact
Contact us
Questions answered

© Crown copyright